

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A method of customizing a multi-media message created by a sender for a recipient, the multi-media message having an animated entity audibly presenting speech converted from text created by the sender, the method comprising:

receiving at least one image from the sender;

associating each at least one image with a tag;

presenting the sender with options to insert the tag associated with one of the at least one image into the sender text; and

after the sender inserts the tag associated with one of the at least one images into the sender text, delivering the multi-media message with the at least one image presented as background to the animated entity according to a position of the tag associated with the at least one image in the sender text, wherein

delivering the multi-media message further comprises presenting the at least one image as background when a word prior to the position of the tag associated with the at least one image is presented by the animated entity.

2. (Currently Amended) The method of ~~customizing a multi-media message created by a sender for a recipient~~ of claim 1, wherein delivering the multi-media message further comprises presenting the at least one image as background when a word a predetermined number of word positions prior to the position of the tag associated with the at least one image is presented by the animated entity.

3. (Original) The method of customizing a multi-media message created by a sender for a recipient of claim 1, wherein the at least one image is a static image.

4. (Original) The method of customizing a multi-media message created by a sender for a recipient of claim 1, wherein the at least one image is a video.

5. (Currently Amended) A method of customizing a multi-media message created by a sender for a recipient, the multi-media message having an animated entity audibly presenting speech converted from text created by the sender, the method comprising:

storing a group of predefined images;
associating each predefined image with a tag;
presenting the sender with options to insert a tag associated with one of the group of predefined images into the sender text;
displaying the sender text, the tag associated with the one of the group of predefined images, and a position of the tag with respect to the sender text, when the sender inserts the tag; and

after the sender inserts the tag associated with one of the group of predefined images into the sender text, delivering the multi-media message with the image associated with the inserted tag presented as background to the animated entity according to a position of the tag within the sender text.

6. (Original) The method of customizing a multi-media message created by a sender for a recipient of claim 5, further comprising:

receiving at least one sender-created image;
associating each at least one sender-created image with a sender-image tag;

presenting the sender with an option to insert a sender-image tag associated with one of the at least one sender-created images into the sender text; and

after the sender inserts the sender-image tag associated with one of the at least one sender-created images into the sender text, delivering the multi-media message with the sender-created image associated with the inserted sender-image tag presented as background to the animated entity according to a position of the sender-image tag within the sender text.

7. (Currently Amended) A method of customizing a multi-media message created by a sender for a recipient, the multi-media message having an animated entity audibly presenting speech converted from text created by the sender, the method using stored predefined images having associated image tags and stored sender-created images having associated sender-created tags, the method comprising:

presenting the sender with options to insert image tags and sender-created tags into the sender text; and

after the sender inserts the image tag or sender-created tags, delivering the multi-media message with the predefined images or sender-created images associated with the inserted image tags and/or sender-created tags presented as background to the animated entity according to a position of the respective tag within the sender text, wherein

the predefined images or sender-created images are displayed as background to the animated entity as soon as a predetermined number of words prior to the position of the respective tag within the sender text begins to be delivered.

8. (Currently Amended) The method of customizing a multi-media message created by a sender for a recipient of claim 7, wherein the predefined images or sender-created images are no longer displayed as background to the animated entity as soon as a predetermined

number of words ~~prior to~~ after the position of the respective tag within the sender text begins to be delivered.

9. (Original) The method of customizing a multi-media message created by a sender for a recipient of claim 7, wherein the predefined images are either static images or video images.

10. (Original) The method of customizing a multi-media message created by a sender for a recipient of claim 9, wherein the sender-created images are either static images or video images.

11. (Currently Amended) A method of customizing a multi-media message created by a sender for a recipient, the multi-media message having an animated entity audibly presenting speech converted from text created by the sender, the method using a stored image ~~images~~ having an associated visible image tag ~~tags~~, the method comprising:

presenting the sender with an option ~~options~~ to insert the visible image tag ~~tags~~ into the sender text, such that when the visible image tag is inserted, the visible image tag, the sender text, and a position of the visible image tag with respect to the sender text is displayed;

presenting the sender with an option ~~options~~ to position the animated entity in any location on a display screen using an animated entity position tag ~~tags~~; and

after the sender inserts the visible image tag ~~tags~~ and the animated entity position tag ~~tags~~, delivering the multi-media message with the image ~~images~~ associated with the inserted visible image tag ~~tags~~ presented as background to the animated entity according to a position of the respective tag within the sender text and wherein the position of the animated entity during the delivery of the multi-media message is associated with the animated entity position tag ~~tags~~.

12. (Currently Amended) The method of customizing a ~~multi-media message created by a sender for a recipient~~ of claim 11, wherein the stored image ~~images are~~ is a static and/or or a video image ~~images~~.

13. (Currently Amended) The method of customizing a multi-media message created by a sender for a recipient of claim 12, further comprising:

presenting the sender with an option to remove the animated entity from the display screen using an animated entity remove tag; and

if the sender inserts the animated entity remove tag, delivering the multi-media message with the image ~~images~~ associated with the inserted image tag ~~tags~~ presented as background while removing the animated entity according to a position of the animated entity remove tag within the sender text.

14. (Currently Amended) A method of customizing a multi-media message created by a sender for a recipient, the multi-media message having an animated entity audibly presenting speech converted from text created by the sender, the method using a stored video ~~segments~~ segment having an associated visible video ~~tags~~ tag, the method comprising:

presenting the sender with ~~options~~ an option to insert the visible ~~stored~~ video segment tag ~~tags~~ into the sender text, such that when the visible video segment tag is inserted into the sender text, the visible video segment tag, the sender text, and a position of the visible video segment tag with respect to the sender text are displayed; and

if the sender inserts ~~one or more~~ the visible video segment tag ~~tags~~ in the sender text, delivering the multi-media message with the video ~~segments~~ segment associated with the inserted video segment tag ~~tags~~ presented as background to the animated entity according to a position of the ~~respective~~ video segment tag within the sender text.

15. (Currently Amended) The method of customizing a multi-media message created by a sender for a recipient of claim 14, wherein the stored video ~~segments are~~ segment is non-sender-created ~~and optionally or~~ sender-created, ~~each having their associated video tags,~~ and wherein presenting the sender with an option ~~options~~ to insert the stored video segment ~~tags~~ tag into the sender text further comprises presenting the sender with a second option ~~options~~ to insert a stored video segment ~~tags~~ associated with a non-sender-created video segment ~~segments~~ and, if stored, presenting the sender with a third option ~~options~~ to insert a video ~~segments tags~~ segment tag associated with a sender-created video ~~segments~~ segment.

16. (Currently Amended) A method of sending a multi-media message from a sender to a recipient, the multi-media message including an animated entity for delivering a message having text, the method comprising:

providing the sender with a group of customizable multi-media message templates, each template of the groups of templates including predefined parameters comprising a predefined text message, a predefined animated entity, a predefined background, predefined background music, and a predefined set of emoticons within the text of the message; and

if the sender chooses a customizable multi-media message template, presenting the sender with options to change any of the predefined parameters; and

presenting the sender with an option to modify a camera position using camera control tags within the text.

17. (Original) The method of sending a multi-media message from a sender to a recipient of claim 16, wherein once the sender customizes the multi-media message template, if at all, the method further comprises delivering the multi-media message to the recipient.

18. (Currently Amended) The method of ~~sending a multi-media message from a sender to a recipient~~ of claim 16, wherein presenting the sender with options to change any of the predefined parameters further comprises presenting the ~~user~~ sender with an option to add the name of the recipient to the multi-media message.

19. (Currently Amended) The method of ~~sending a multi-media message from a sender to a recipient~~ of claim 16, wherein presenting the sender with options to change any of the predefined parameters further comprises presenting the ~~user~~ sender with an option to choose from a list of predefined and/or sender-added options for each of the template parameters for customizing the multi-media message.

20. (Currently Amended) The method of ~~sending a multi-media message from a sender to a recipient~~ of claim 16, wherein presenting the sender with options to change any of the predefined parameters further comprises presenting the ~~user~~ sender with an option to choose at least one position from which the animated entity will deliver the message.

21. (Currently Amended) The method of sending a multi-media message from a sender to a recipient of claim 20, wherein presenting the user with an option to choose at least one position from which the animated entity will deliver the message further comprises presenting the ~~user~~ sender with an option to control animated entity entrance and departure features.

22. (Currently Amended) The method of sending a multi-media message from a sender to a recipient of claim ~~[[16]]~~ 17, ~~further comprising presenting the user with an option to modify a camera position using camera control tags within the text~~ delivering the multi-

media message further comprises presenting the background when a word prior to a position of a tag associated with an image of the background is presented by the animated entity .

23. (Currently Amended) ~~[[A]] The method of sending a multi-media message from a sender to a recipient, the multi-media message including an animated entity for delivering a message having text~~ claim 16, the method further comprising:

providing the sender with ~~options~~ an option to choose an animated entity from a group of animated entities;

~~—once the sender chooses an animated entity to deliver the message, presenting the sender with options to add accessories to the animated entity; and~~

~~—once the sender chooses accessories to add to the animated entity, if any, delivering the multi-media message to the recipient.~~

24. (Currently Amended) The method of ~~sending a multi-media message from a sender to a recipient of claim 23,~~ further comprising:

~~wherein presenting the sender with options to add accessories to the animated entity further comprises~~ presenting the sender with ~~options~~ an option to add accessories an accessory comprising one of glasses, ear rings, ~~a hat~~ hats, ~~a shirt~~ shirts, hair color, hair style, and or facial hair to the animated entity.

25. (Currently Amended) The method of ~~sending a multi-media message from a sender to a recipient of claim~~ ~~[[23]]~~ 24, wherein presenting the sender with an option ~~options~~ to add ~~accessories~~ an accessory to the animated entity further comprises presenting the sender with a list of accessories, the list of accessories including accessories provided by a multi-media message service provider and accessories added by the sender.

26. (Currently Amended) The method of ~~sending a multi-media message from a sender to a recipient~~ of claim [[23]] 24, wherein upon the sender choosing the option to add an accessory ~~options~~, presenting the sender with a preview of the animated entity with the ~~chosen~~ added accessory ~~options~~.

27. (Currently Amended) A method of sending a multi-media message from a sender to a recipient, the multi-media message including an animated entity for delivering a message having text, the method comprising:

providing the sender with options to choose an animated entity from a group of animated entities;

providing the sender with options to insert emoticons in the text of the message;

providing the sender with options to modify an amplitude of emoticons inserted in the text of the message;

once the sender chooses emoticons to add to the animated entity, if any, delivering the multi-media message to the recipient, wherein

if the sender modifies the amplitude of emoticons inserted in the text, changing the appearance of the modified emoticons in the text of the message to reflect the change in amplitude for each modified inserted emoticon.

28. (Canceled).

29. (Currently Amended) The method of ~~sending a multi-media message~~ of claim [[28]] 27, wherein changing the appearance of the modified emoticons comprises changing a color associated with the modified emoticon ~~from a black on white background to black on colored background~~.

30. (Currently Amended) The method of sending a multi-media message of claim [[29]]
27, wherein the appearance of the modified emoticons relates to an intensity of the modified
amplitude.